

East Alaska Resource Management Plan

UPDATE

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THE DRAFT EAST ALASKA RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EARMP) WILL BE RELEASED IN EARLY APRIL 2005.

Due to the complex nature of the document, the Draft East Alaska Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has taken longer to prepare than expected and will be released in early April 2005. At that time, another newsletter will be mailed out to all on the mailing list announcing the availability of the Draft RMP/EIS for review and explaining how comments can be submitted.

The Draft East Alaska RMP/EIS will be addressing some controversial issues for many user groups. This is a broad, overlying document that establishes goals and objectives and identifies actions and allowable uses to achieve them. Many site-specific decisions will be made in implementation-level plans that will provide the opportunity for more public involvement."

The types of decisions this RMP will cover include: designating areas that will be open or closed to **mineral exploration and development**, where the BLM will focus **forestry** practices, which areas will be **open, limited or closed to OHVs** in the summer and in the winter months, how **commercial uses** will be authorized on BLM-managed lands, **interim** and **long-**

term guidelines for the management of **selected lands**, how **wildlife habitat** will be monitored and **enhanced** throughout the planning area, areas where **recreation** will be the focus of management, and how to **maintain** and protect **subsistence** opportunities and resources.

The Draft East Alaska RMP/EIS will be available for review in three formats. The public can download the information from the website (below), request a CD-ROM that contains all of the information, or request a hard copy (300+ pages). Each format will provide complete and consistent information including all chapters, appendices, maps, and tables. If you have already requested a hard copy or a CD or make your request before the Draft is released, it will automatically be mailed to you in April.

The public comment period will last **90 days** after the Notice of Availability is published in the Federal Register, **not** 90 days from when you receive your copy of the Draft for review.

The closing date for the public comment period will be posted on the East Alaska RMP website.

Send: Questions regarding the East Alaska RMP

Requests for the Draft in the hard copy or CD format

To be taken off the mailing list

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why are you doing this RMP now?

A: The current guidance for the lands the Glennallen Field Office administered is the 1980 Southcentral Management Framework Plan. This plan is out of date and does not provide the guidance our resource specialists need to deal with current issues.

Q: Who is telling you to write this RMP now?

A: There is currently an overhaul of RMPs nationwide. Our guidance is coming from Washington D.C..

Q: Are you closing off all lands to OHV use?

A: No, we are designating areas as open, limited, or closed. We are currently not supporting the closure of any area to summer OHV use but are pursuing a more active management role to address increased user conflicts and resource degradation caused by unmanaged OHV use.

Q: How are you addressing selected lands within the plan?

A: For areas that are predominately selected, by either the State of Alaska or a Native corporation, interim and long-term management guidance is outlined. There are also specific areas, travel management for example, where the BLM will work with the selecting entity if they wish to get more

specific with management of those lands before they are conveyed.

Q: Is the BLM Preferred Alternative another way of saying that the decision has already been made and public input will have no effect?

A: No, the public is encouraged to comment on all alternatives presented. In identifying BLM's Preferred Alternative, we are simply telling the public where we currently stand. This should help to guide the public to put their efforts on comments where they can be most effective.

Q: Will there be public meetings once the Draft is released?

A: Yes, we will hold public meetings, not hearings, that will be an opportunity for specific questions to be addressed. There will only be meetings in centralized locations (Anchorage, Glennallen, Fairbanks) although questions can be addressed to the Glennallen Field Office directly at any point throughout the comment period. The meetings are intended to guide the comment process, not to collect or document comments. All comments need to be submitted either by e-mail or mail to the BLM, Glennallen Field Office by the end of the 90 day public comment period to be considered.